

USA-Croatian cooperation in education and training for public administration in Croatia

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ABSTRACT

For the past six years the Unger International Center for Local Government Leadership in the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio USA, has been collaborating with the Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka and USAID's Local Government Reform Project to advance education and in-service training for local government officials in Croatia. This paper presents an in depth review and analysis of focusing on its successes and challenges and the application of lessons learned to the future of public administration education, training and professional development in Southeast Europe.

Key words: Education, training, public administration, Croatia, USA

1. The Unger International Center

The Unger International Center for Local Government Leadership owes its existence to Paul A. and Sonja Franz Unger. Paul Unger first arrived in Zagreb for a Christmas party one wintry December night in 1945, en route from his post as Commandant of a United Nations refugee camp for Croatians in Egypt to his new assignment in Split as Administrator for the United Nations relief

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program in Yugoslavia. That evening, he met Sonja Franz, a Croatian architect-engineer who became his wife by the next holiday season. Soon after they married, the Ungers left Croatia for the United States, where Mr. Unger was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of the US Department of the Interior. In 1953, Mr. Unger joined The Unger Company, a national food packaging developer in Cleveland, OH, as President/CEO.

Many years passed as the Ungers raised a family and achieved prominence through volunteer service and community activism. All the while, they kept close contact with family, friends and colleagues who had remained overseas and yearned for a free, democratic Croatia. High hopes generated by the 1990 declaration of independence from Yugoslavia were quickly dashed by brutal civil war. Within a few years, however, the Ungers and their Croatian contacts perceived a window of opportunity. It was during this period, as peace was restored, that the Paul and Sonja Unger Foundation was established.

To build a program that could provide educational and professional development for local elected officials, in 1999, Mr. Unger turned to the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University (CSU), which is ranked second in the nation for its programs in urban policy and municipal management. The first Unger Seminar for Local Government Leaders was conducted at the college in January 2001. The success of the Cleveland seminar, the interest of Croatian government leadership and the support of the USAID Mission to Croatia inspired the establishment of the Unger International Center for Local Government Leadership in November 2001 supported in part by a continuing gift from the Paul and Sonja Unger Foundation. Through his dedication, commitment and leadership, Mr. Unger has made, and continues to make, a tremendous contribution to Croatia's and Southeast Europe's progress in local government.

2. University Partnerships

Higher Education for Development (HED) works in close partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) primarily by funding innovative partnerships between U.S. colleges and universities and institutions of higher learning in developing countries. Applicants compete for

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HED funding through a rigorous, peer reviewed process. Once awards are made, partners design and implement programs that have a significant impact on a region's economic and social well-being (www.hedprogram.org).

The Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Rijeka and the director of the Unger Center began collaborating in July 2001 to pursue the development of a postgraduate (according to the US standards it is a graduate program, but according to Croatian standards it was and is a postgraduate program) program in public administration at the University of Rijeka. The following is a brief chronology of the developing collaboration and the ultimate selection for an HED University Partnership grant:

- July 2001 – The Unger Center Director travels to Croatia to meet with the Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Rijeka, Croatia, and other local officials to initiate a collaboration between the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University and the University of Rijeka;
- April 2002 – The Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Rijeka visits the Levin College to meet the faculty and discuss the elements of a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation between the two universities;
- June 2002 – The Rector of the University of Rijeka and the president of Cleveland State University sign the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation that was developed by the Unger Center Director and the Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Rijeka;
- June 2002 - Based on the signed Memorandum, a group, made up of Croatian professors from the Faculty of Economics of Rijeka (6 out of 10), was invited to Cleveland to receive an overview of academic and professional programs being offered by Maxine Goodman Levine College. This visit resulted in a Proposal for Collaboration between the Faculty of Economics Rijeka and Maxine Goodman Levine College.
- June 2003 – The Unger Center, working in collaboration with the University of Rijeka and the USAID Local Government Reform Project conducts a seminar for local government officials in Rijeka;
- September 2003 – Professors from the Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka work in Cleveland with Levin College faculty and staff to finalize a graduate level curriculum in public administration that will be sent to the faculty senate for approval;

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- October 2003 – The Unger Center and University of Rijeka apply for an HED University Partnership grant to implement a postgraduate program in public administration with a specialization in local government;
- December 2003 – The Economics Faculty Senate at the University of Rijeka approve the postgraduate level curriculum in public administration;
- February 2004 – The center is notified of its competitive selection for the University Partnership grant in the amount of \$99,981 to support the graduate program in public administration developed by the collaborative efforts of the Unger Center and the Faculty of Economics at the University of Rijeka;
- April 2004 - The start of the postgraduate two year master scientific program "Public Administration;"
- November 2006 - The start of a revised one-year postgraduate professional master program "Management in the Public Sector."
- November 2006 – A parallel specialist one-year postgraduate program "Health Care Management" began as a cooperation between the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Economics, both from the University of Rijeka and Maxine Goodman Levine College of Urban Affairs of Cleveland State University.

However, our main concern in this paper and the central program of our cooperation is the MPA and its development. The success of the Program Proposal was the result of more than three years of collaboration which convinced the peer review team that the Unger Center and the University of Rijeka were sincerely committed to achieving sustainable results that were consistent with the USAID mission to Croatia. The grant was awarded based on the partners' commitment to (www.hedprogram.org):

- Develop a model Master of Public Administration program at the University of Rijeka which is compatible with European Union standards for high education and replicable at other universities in Croatia and Southeast Europe;
- Offer a specialization in municipal management in order to increase local government capacity to manage resources;
- Improve local governance through the development of professional administrative skills at the local level.

It should be noted that applications for USAID University Partnership grants must demonstrate that the proposed project is directly related to the

mission for the specific country. The good news is that in countries seeking EU membership, democracy, governance and building capacity of public officials are boiler plate issues that can be readily adapted to university partnerships.

3. The MPA program at the University of Rijeka

3.1 Program Design

In order to demonstrate that the partnership's objectives were directly related to the mission, the program design portion of the application opened with the following statement: According to USAID's strategic plan for Croatia, "The Roles of counties, cities and municipalities in relation to the central Government remain ambiguous. Public administration and accounting skills remain undeveloped and few cities have fully automated these functions. Therefore, local governments are not in a position to assume responsibilities that may devolve to them as a result of fiscal decentralization, and few are deemed creditworthy and capable of incurring debt for capital investments in infrastructure." IR2.1.3 "is aimed at capacity building of governance institutions... local government will be required to develop greater responsiveness to constituents and assume more responsibility following fiscal reform. Meeting this challenge will require increased management and administrative skills, and result in an improved local environment..."

3.2 Curriculum Development

Designing the curriculum was a task that began in the summer of 2002 and was completed in September 2003. The partners first reviewed the existing curricula for specialties that were offered in the Faculty of Economics and the curriculum for the MPA program at the Levin College to determine which courses at Rijeka could be included in the MPA curriculum as is or with minor modifications. Since "Public Administration" is a multi-disciplinary program, the review extended beyond the courses offered in the Faculty of Economics. In September 2003 professors from the Faculty of Economics came to Cleveland to collaborate with Levin College faculty and staff on the final design of a

curriculum that would maximize the use of existing courses and professors and minimize the travel and faculty costs of Levin College professors. While in Cleveland the team defined the objectives, developed a program description, identified prerequisites, determined which courses required support from Levin College, identified professors from both universities to team teach courses requiring support, and developed the curriculum for review by the University of Rijeka Faculty Senate.¹

3.3 Teaching Methodologies

The partners realized that a variety of teaching methods would be needed to deliver the new program. Team teaching would require intensive collaboration between instructors. The grant provided travel costs and compensation for professors. Faculty from the University of Rijeka came to the Levin College to prepare syllabi and discuss their respective roles. Professors from Levin traveled to Rijeka to teach. In order to contain costs, team taught courses were offered in an intensive accelerated format. Levin professors would teach two to three consecutive days for six to eight hours each day.

Additionally, distance learning, video conferencing and web-based technologies were explored to further reduce travel related expenses. Another possibility to achieve cost efficiency through scale would be to formulate course contents that could be offered to a broader audience, let's say students of more coexisting postgraduate programs at one university, or even between distant universities, for example Rijeka, Ljubljana there would be American professor visiting.

Further, university educators in the United States generally employ an interactive approach which involves rather substantial student participation. This is different from the traditional lecture approach often found in European universities. The interactive approach is often difficult for professors and students in the European educational environment. This can be further complicated by the language problems when the primary language of the student differs from that of the educator.

¹ For the list of even 15 required courses see: Javna administracija, Program poslijediplomskog znanstvenog studija, 2003, p. 4-5.

3.4 Major results of the program

The program resulted in a lot of development outcomes, as well as serendipitous outcomes. We have experienced a lot of challenges and learned some lessons, which have later helped us in the future development of the new program.

- **Development outcomes:**
 - The first class of MPA students completed their lessons in the summer of 2006. This was the primary developmental outcome;
 - This graduate program was developed in accordance with European Union standards for higher education;
 - This program will also serve as a model for other universities in Croatia. The program will develop the skills of Croatian professors and improve their cooperation with local authorities;
 - Furthermore, the engagement of the local administration and officials on the program improved their cooperation with the Faculty of Economics and their understanding of the need for advanced education in local government management;
 - The partners developed and published a text book: Economic Decentralization and Local Government. This was a collaborative effort by the faculties of both universities, USAID and the Local Government Reform Project – Croatia;
 - Inside the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Economics has collaborated with the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Philosophy in order to offer some interdisciplinary courses;
 - The Local Government Reform Project (USAID) has organized workshops inside the curriculum of most courses;
 - Faculty of Economics also formally engaged some local public administrators as the official “outside collaborators” of the University to assist in curriculum development and lecturers;
 - The University of Rijeka continues to collaborate with the School of Public Administration at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and this collaboration has brought visiting faculty from Slovenia to the University of Rijeka;
 - A USAID sponsored training of professors from five Croatian universities was conducted at the Levin College of Urban Affairs, CSU, in May 2006 to teach methods for developing continuing education programs for local government officials;

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- CSU professors participating in the program have gained invaluable experience in international public administration and have become more knowledgeable about the EU and the need for educated public administrators. Global learning is now a very important part of academic programs at U.S. universities. CSU professors have gained valuable experience in global issues;
- 6 Professors from the University of Rijeka have come to Cleveland State University to meet with CSU professors to plan and design courses identified for team teaching and to plan their cooperation in the future and the development of the courses.
- **Serendipitous outcomes:**
 - The partnership improved the collaboration of the Faculty of Economics with local and regional government as well as some other Faculties and institutions, whose experts collaborated directly or indirectly with the partnership. It also fostered Faculty of Economics' inclusion into NISPA (The Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe);
 - Four professors from the Faculty have taken part at the NISPA annual conference in 2006.. The conference has also discussed the broader possibility of cooperation of all CEE (including SEE) public administration schools and programs;
 - Two of our best students are so good that they will continue their career at the University level (they will join the two other faculties of the University of Rijeka);
 - The emerging collaboration of universities of the FYR (especially Slovenia – Faculty of Public Administration) has been an unanticipated success, but it cannot be directly attributed to the partnership;
 - The Faculty of Economics is collaborating with the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concerning the inclusion of Algerian postgraduate students in the program. The recommendation came from the Croatian Office for the Education of Public Officers.
- **Challenges and lessons:**
 - The program has been more expensive to implement than originally hoped for. One major problem is that the public administration is a multidisciplinary program and the universities in Croatia (and other Central European countries) are not structured to support multidisciplinary programs. "Faculties" are separated geographically, philosophically and economically and this mitigates against cooperation among faculties;
 - The program turned out also to be too long and exhausting. The students, as well as public sector administrators outside the program

expressed their wish for a shorter and easier, as well as more practical oriented program;

- The fact that this postgraduate program appeared in 2003, a time when no similar programs existed on the market, made the program harder to market. The acronym MPA, as a common denominator of similar programs in US and Europe, was not recognizable to the potential audience of Croatian public servants and officials. This meant that, even though leaflets were mailed to a vast number of municipalities, there was no adequate response in terms of candidate enrolment.²

Additionally, Croatia (like many other transitional countries) is pursuing inclusion in the European Union. In higher education, universities must achieve the standards articulated in the Bologna Process. This has required a total review and reevaluation of all academic programs at all universities in Croatia.

3.5 Further development of the postgraduate program

Due to the process of transforming higher education in Croatia and entire Europe ("Bologna process"), but also due to the demand of the local sector, the above two years postgraduate scientific course ("Public Administration") that had 15 courses and lasted 3+1 semester was transformed into the more practical oriented one year specialization program "Management in the Public Sector".

The new program has a wide range of electives (even 16; two of them are taken from the other new postgraduate specialist programs). We have consulted mostly the local sector, as its experts are more actively included in the program as outside cooperators. In order to meet the wishes of our attendants, beside the introduction of elective courses and new courses, we have decided to shorten the number of hours per course, to try to include even more practitioners from the field and to ease the final paper which is to be written (not Master's thesis anymore but simpler paper: less scientific oriented, almost exclusively practically oriented).

The new program has the following curriculum (Prijedlog programa Poslijediplomskog specijalističkog studija Menadžment u javnom sektoru. 2006, p. 5):

² Efforts were also made to achieve some publicity in form of newspaper articles and radio interviews. These too gave little result.

1st Semester: required courses

1. Public Sector Economics (Faculty of Administration, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia);
2. Economics of development (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka; Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University);
3. Statistic methods for management in public sector (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University);
4. Organizational development in public sector (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka).

2nd Semester: electives

Students are free to choose 3 electives out of the offered list of courses:

1. Entrepreneurial management (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka; Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University);
2. Public administration (Faculty of Law, University of Rijeka);
3. European legal framework for administrative procedures in the economic domain (Faculty of Law, University of Rijeka; Paris II);
4. Local economic development (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka; Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University);
5. Local public finance and budgeting (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka; Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University);
6. Economics of public enterprises and non-profit organizations (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka; Faculty of Administration, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia);
7. Strategic management methods (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka);
8. Performance analysis in public sector (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka; Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University);

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9. Financing local public investments (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka; Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University);
10. Marketing management in local government (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka);
11. EU governance (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka);
12. Civil society and citizen's participation (Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka);
13. Urban economics (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka);
14. Accounting for budget and non profit organizations (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka);
15. E – Government (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka);
16. Evaluation of projects in public sector (Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka);
17. Tax Systems of Croatia and other European countries (Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften und Informatik, Universität Klagenfurt; Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka).

This time, three times more students enrolled in the new program. Such a rising interest for the program is not only the result of the better characteristics of the new program (shorter, more electives, more practical oriented, less teaching hours...), but also of the rising awareness of the public sector servants for their future education. Although this was in accordance with the public sector reform as well as the entire higher education reform in Croatia (and the entire Europe), the role of the Urban institute in Croatia regarding the segment of local public sector, should not be neglected.

The first year of implementing the revised program proved the decision to make the program shorter was proven right. Another contributing issue to this year's high enrollment has been a grant offered to students working for local government. However, the most important set of factors that influenced the increase in candidate interest comes from the change of settings. The process of EU accession has triggered a number of reforms in the public sector of Croatia. Mostly, through CARDS programs, there has been an inflow of both dedicated resources and advisors focusing very much on public administration,

and decentralization in particular, which led to enhanced press coverage.³ Also, since 2004 the newly formed Central Office for Public Administration has been in charge of administering programs related to public administration from a national level. So, one may say that our program appeared in a perfect time to be able to accumulate some start-up experience before more comprehensive reform processes had time to evolve and come to public attention. Once they did, we had already restructured our Master program and a pioneering market position that we now have to preserve and further develop.

The adherence of Croatia to European processes would also put more emphasis on lifelong learning providing for higher demand of candidates seeking professional programs of education. The University of Rijeka's Strategy refers explicitly to the Lisbon Strategy and declares the University would engage in active participation in the European Integrated Life Long Learning Program.⁴

4. Continuing education and professional development

While working with the Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka on the development of the MPA program, the Unger International Center for Local Government Leadership was selected as a subcontractor to the USAID Local Government Reform Project. The LGRP provides assistance to strengthen components of local governments in Croatia to expand citizen participation and enable them to assume greater fiscal and administrative responsibilities through decentralization. While there are several components to the LGRP project, only the training component will be discussed here.

During its first four years, the LGRP developed training models including training material, case studies and trained facilitators/consultants to support

3 European institutions support reforms needed to meet commitments under the SAA–Stabilization and Association Agreements, for which the EU has set up SAP – Structural Adjustment programs and loans, ISPA – Instruments for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession and other programs, such as CARDS Programs related to PA and including a Program to increase administrative capacity, Program to increase capacity of the Anti-corruption Agency, Program of fiscal decentralization, Program for developing a strategy for enhancing possibilities of regional development, Program for developing internal financial control in the public sector, Program to increase capacity to manage the public debt, Program to strengthen the customs system and procedures...

4 For the more detailed information consult: Strategy 2007-2013, University of Rijeka, 2007, p. 8., Croatia Strategy for Adult Learning 2005-2010, adopted in June 2005.

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continuing education of local administrators and managers. These models focus on the following critical areas of local self governance(www.usaid.gov):

- Asset Management;
- Citizen Participation;
- Economic Development;
- Finance Management & Budgeting;
- Human Resources Management;
- Information Technology;
- Organizational Development;
- Performance Management;
- Procurement Processes;
- Project Packaging for Grants & Loans.

The scope of work for the Unger Center was to collaborate with academic institutions in Croatia and assist them in the development and implementation of continuing education certificate programs that would utilize the wealth of material developed by the LGRP. The objectives were to institutionalize continuing education in local government management and assure sustainability of the LGRP models and related materials. The Unger Center began work on this task in June 2004 with a series of meetings in Osijek, Zagreb, Zadar and Split. During these initial meetings the discussions with college and university officials centered upon informing the officials of our project in general terms and soliciting a determination of interest in work with the LGRP. The initial interest expressed by most of the academic institutions was guardedly optimistic and openly discussed their concerns.

4.1 Financing Continuing Education in the Public Sector

Clearly, one of the more serious concerns was financing a major effort in continuing education in the public sector. Realizing this concern, the LGRP provided financial support to institutions willing to develop workshops and seminars that incorporated one or more of the models. Registration fees, travel and lodging for local government participants were either totally or partially paid by USAID. With this support several workshops were held at the Universities of Rijeka, Split, Zadar, Zagreb and the Zagreb School of Economics

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and Management (ZSEM). The Unger Center provided facilitators for several workshops including the following:

- January 2005 –Economic Development/ Sports & Tourism, Zagreb;
- March 2005 – Public Sector Human Resources Management, Zagreb;
- July 2005 – Economic Development, Zagreb;
- September 2005 – Citizen Participation, University of Zadar and Zagreb;
- December 2005 – Asset Management, Sibenik;
- May 2006 – Public Sector Human Resources Management, Selectio Consultants Vinkovci;
- September 2006 – Public Sector Human Resources Mgt., Selectio Consultants, Crkvenica;
- September 2006 – Developing & Financing Continuing Education, Split;
- October 2006 – Developing & Financing Continuing Education, Zagreb.

Additionally, the Unger Center provided two week-long training sessions at the Levin College for professors and administrators from Croatia. The sessions focused on several concerns in the development and financing of sector continuing education programs in the public sector. Participants from most of the academic institutions mentioned attended one of these sessions which were held in May 2006 and March 2007.

One of the significant costs associated with continuing education is the educational material needed. The LGRP has developed manuals, case studies, and research data for each of the models listed in 1.5. Not only is this material available to educational institutions, but, since USAID missions are charged with developing programs that are replicable and sustainable, it is likely that embassies would be pleased to see this material used.

Finding and, if necessary training, knowledgeable instructors can be expensive. One of the advantages of continuing education is that university professors are not a necessary precondition. In fact, most educators agree that practitioners are, in many instances, better equipped to facilitate continuing education courses. The LGRP staff has trained over 100 consultants that specialize in one or more of the models. Further, as USAID missions terminate, as will be the case in Croatia at the end of this fiscal year, many of the staff specialists remain in country. In addition to training consultants, the LGRP has trained and used local government officials to facilitate their educational programs.

These officials, often mayors and high level administrators, add credibility to the training.

Obviously, the best and most cost effective way to recruit continuing education students is for a credible organization or institution to require X number of hours of continuing education per year. This is the case in a growing number of professions such as accounting, nursing, teaching and law. In the US, required continuing education is generally established by professional organizations, for example, Bar Associations for attorneys. The Association of Towns and Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia is one of many professional associations that is in a position to strongly encourage professional development of local government employees. The newly created Local Governance Academy in Zagreb is another. Throughout Southeast Europe there are many similar organizations and government offices focused on professional development of government officials. The European Union is yet another organization that can and does provide support for continuing education of government employees.

Simply stated, recruiting students for continuing education is a matter of supply and demand. The academic institutions in Southeast Europe can supply credible continuing education and professional development programs for public officials. The governmental professional organizations and governmental institutions will create the demand by encouraging, supporting and, hopefully one day, requiring continuing education for those who want to make public service a respectable career.

4.2 The Advantages of Collaboration

In addition to the costs described above, administration of a continuing education program includes the costs of staff, facilities, overhead, planning and evaluating the program. These expenses alone can be challenging. When the professors and administrators came to the Levin College for training in May 2006 and March 2007, one of the models studied for administering a continuing education program was the Ohio Certified Public Managers Program (OCPM) which is accredited in 28 states in America.

The OCPM is a management development program for public managers. It is a collaboration of the state of Ohio and eleven of Ohio's state universities for local, county and state public employees and managers. The program www.das.ohio.gov/hrd/ocpm/program.htm:

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- Has a curriculum designed by specialists from Ohio's state universities and government officials;
- Offers 300 hours of structured learning activities in four core curriculum areas;
- Is taught by a staff from university, government and private sectors;
- Equips Ohio's public managers with the latest management information and techniques and offers practical solutions and enhances intergovernmental relationships;
- Is offered currently at locations in central, northeast, southeast and southwest Ohio;
- Is administered by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services' (ODAS) in partnership with the state universities.

While far from perfect, the OCPM model offers a cost effective approach to designing and implementing a credible and certified continuing education program for public officials at the state, regional, county and local levels of government. The collaboration offers a curriculum that is broadly accepted and involves university and government personnel in program design, implementation, and evaluation. Further, it dramatically reduces the costs associated with administration, educational materials, instructors, administrative staff, marketing and recruiting. Essentially, it provides for economies of scale. Granted there are significant differences in the evolving laws among the countries in Southeast Europe. And there are significant differences in the academic institutions. However, there are also significant similarities in public administration and education within these countries as evidenced by this International Symposium on Public Administration in Southeast Europe.

4.3 What is a Credible Certificate Program?

Probably the most significant difficulty in responding to this question is the vagueness of the word "certificate". Most professionals have, at one time or another, received certificates of appreciation, recognition, participation or completion of some kind of workshop, seminar or training session. It's not unlikely to assume that the attendees of the symposium will receive a certificate of attendance, if for no other reason than proof that they were here. One might say that a certificate, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

There is also an entrepreneurial aspect to continuing education and certificates that are received by participants as evidenced by the large number of consulting firms and NGOs that offer training throughout the public and private sectors world wide. The credibility of a certificate is derived from the credibility of the organization that offers it. Certainly, colleges and universities are credible organizations with the primary purpose of educating. As such, they are in an ideal position to assume leadership in continuing education for the public sector.

4.4 International Standards for Continuing Education

The International Association for Continuing Education & Training (IACET) has developed ten widely accepted criteria for educational providers of continuing education.

- Organizational credibility;
- Responsibility and control;
- A system for awarding continuing education credit (CEU);
- A learning environment with support systems;
- A process for educational needs identification;
- Pre-determined learning outcomes;
- Planning and instructional personnel;
- Content and instructional methods;
- Assessment of learning outcomes;
- Post teaching evaluation.

The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) was created by the IACET as a measurement of continuing education. Unlike a semester hour, one CEU is equal to ten contact hours of participation in an organized educational experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction (www.iacet.org).

It would be interesting for colleges and universities in Southeast Europe to explore these criteria and standards and research possibilities of applying them to the public sector in their countries. In many respects, the only differences between the criteria and standards for continuing education and academic degree programs are the method of crediting and the credentials required of the instructional personnel.

5. Conclusion

The authors hope that the information provided in this paper will facilitate the efforts of the participants in the symposium to provide leadership and direction to the future of public administration in Southeast Europe. The Unger-International Center's contract with the USAID Mission to Croatia ended in August 2007 but it is hoped that our collaboration with the academic institutions will continue and expand. Many lessons were learned in designing and implementing the MPA degree program at the University of Rijeka. Developing the continuing education and certificate programs in collaboration with the USAID Local Government Reform Project and the many academic institutions is a continuing challenge. Much was learned yet much work remains.

In February 2006, the Unger International Center for Local Government Leadership at Cleveland State University submitted a proposal to the United States Senate for support of our objectives to:

- Continue and expand our partnerships with universities in Croatia, Slovenia and others in Southeast Europe to award undergraduate, graduate degrees and continuing education programs to local government officials from the countries across Southeastern Europe. Our partners from these universities have had extensive experience as international diplomats with very strong reputations for peace and development in several of the new countries in the region;
- Increase Cleveland State University's reputation and image with the US Department of State and the US Congress as an international center for the study of local government administration and economic development. This will complement the College's existing national recognition in the areas of public administration and economic development;
- Provide technical assistance to local government officials, including consulting, applied research and professional development support in the new emerging nations to improve public administration and economic development.

This request is still pending. The authors will be deeply committed to continuing the cooperation in the future, based on some informal and/or other formal arrangements. They hope, their experience would facilitate different forms of future US-European cooperation in the field of higher education and public administration.

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POVZETEK

SODELOVANJE ZDA IN HRVAŠKE PRI IZOBRAŽEVANJU IN USPOSOBLJANJU ZA DELO V JAVNI UPRAVI NA HRVAŠKEM

Zadnjih šest let je Unger - mednarodni center za lokalno upravo na Fakulteti za urbanizem Maxine Goodman Levin Univerze v Clevelandu v zvezni državi Ohio v ZDA sodeloval z Ekonomsko fakulteto Univerze v Reki. S Projektom reforme lokalne uprave ameriškega urada za mednarodni razvoj (USAID), so želeli izboljšati izobraževanje in permanentno usposabljanje javnih uslužbencev na lokalni ravni na Hrvaškem. Članek podrobno predstavlja in analizira dosežke in izzive tega sodelovanja ter uporabe pridobljenih spoznanj pri izobraževanju, usposabljanju in poklicnem razvoju v javni upravi v jugovzhodni Evropi v prihodnosti.

Dvoletna štipendija USAID za meduniverzitetno partnerstvo (University Partnership Grant), ki so jo prejeli leta 2003, je omogočila zasnovo, razvoj kurikuluma in izvedbo programa magistrskega študija iz javne uprave, osredotočenega na lokalno upravo. Sodelovanje je vključevalo obiske profesorjev z Univerze v Reki na fakulteti v Levinu in obratno. V Levinu so zasnovali kurikulum, na Univerzi v Reki pa so v skupinah izvajali predavanja. Razvoj in izvedba programa sta vključevala tudi sodelovanje profesorjev s Fakulteto za upravo Univerze v Ljubljani, kot tudi drugih profesorjev z Univerze v Reki (s pravne in filozofske fakultete). Prvi letnik je s predavanji zaključil septembra 2006. Trenutno je v program vpisanih več kot 30 študentov. Kurikulum za ta program ustreza standardom Evropske unije (Bolonjski sporazum).

Leta 2004 so mednarodni Unger center za lokalno upravo v konkurenci drugih izbrali za sodelovanje z LGRP urada USAID in s številnimi hrvaškimi univerzami in fakultetami. Cilj je bil pomagati tem akademskih institucijam pri zasnovi in implementaciji nadaljevalnega izobraževanja in programov za pridobitev poklicnih certifikatov s področja lokalnega, ekonomskega in organizacijskega razvoja, upravljanja s financami in človeškimi viri, informacijske tehnologije, participacije državljanov in obdelave naročil.

Naloga Unger centra je bila institucionalizirati poklicni razvoj vodij lokalne uprave znotraj hrvaških akademskih institucij s pomočjo gradiv,

študij primerov in usposobljenih koordinatorjev, ki so bili del projekta, in na ta način doseči trajnostnost prizadevanj urada USAID. Del teh gradiv je bil vključen v uporabni del diplomskega študija v Reki. Poleg tega so usposobili skupino svetovalcev, ki bi lokalnim upravam na številnih kritičnih področjih nudili svetovanje, vse to pa se neposredno navezuje na izzive lokalnih uprav po vsej jugovzhodni Evropi, še posebej tistih, ki si želijo vstopiti v Evropsko unijo.

Delo Unger centra je obsegalo izdatno sodelovanje s hrvaškimi profesorji in javnimi uslužbenci na lokalni ravni, njihovo usposabljanje na fakulteti Levin ter podporo fakultetam in univerzam pri zasnovi in izvedbi delavnic in pri nadaljevalnem izobraževanju ter certifikatnih programih. Čeprav je LGRP na Hrvaškem uradno zaključen, zaveza k poklicnemu izobraževanju in razvoju javnih uslužbencev ostaja.

Avtorji verjamejo, da bodo pridobljena spoznanja in rezultati njihovega sodelovanja omogočili napredek izobraževanja in poklicnega razvoja javnih uslužbencev na Hrvaškem in po vsej jugovzhodni Evropi.